

[1] THE KINSHIP SYSTEM OF THE NAYARS OF MALABAR

I The Malabar Coast

(1) Physical Features

- 131 The Malabar Coast lies in the extreme south-west of India, along the shores of the Arabian Sea. The coastline is 360 miles long, the area 14,908 square miles. It is divided off from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the centre of the area by the Palghat Gap. Though periodic im-
[167] migrations have taken place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, the mountains prevented close contacts between the people who became established there and their neighbors to the east. On the other
[177] hand, its position laid the area open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (1,000 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (5th century B.C.), Romans (1st century A.D.), Chinese (6th century A.D.), and after 1498 the Portuguese followed by the English, Dutch and French.
- 133 The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip, the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats.
- [241] The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product is coconuts, with some rice and bananas.
- [2] In the southern half of the area it is broken by salt-water lagoons which for over 100 miles form a continuous navigable chain, parallel to
133 the sea. Almost all the chief towns (from north
361 to south, Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé,

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic ac-121
count (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources 611
include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portu-127
guese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travel-
ers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few
historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Mal-
ayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed 178
throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and 84
relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats
of government and from modern market centers. Many other tradi-124
tional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my 114
own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947
and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational frame-
work into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with
many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.² Some 127
information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories 124
of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents re-
lating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which 114
I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952a; see also Rao, 178
1957: 74-142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India 131
beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area 133
about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India
by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by
the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took 167
place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal re-133
gion, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains pre-
vented continuous contacts between the people who became estab-
lished there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its 177
position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, in-
cluding Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and
Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

² My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible 122
by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and
of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthro-
pology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters
have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research
Council, in 1954 and 1956.

564

the highest class. There are many who profess to belong to certain Nambuthiri *illams*, such as the Azhavancheri and other *illams*. They are obliged to be strict vegetarians owing to their service in the Nambuthiri families.

3. *Swarupattil Nayars*.—The members of this class render services to the Kshatriyas. There are, it is said, three minor subdivisions, namely, *Pindiynmar*, *Patinduvittukar* and [357] *Chitayans*. The members of the first class serve as menials in the houses of Kshatriyas; those of the second have to supply them with everything necessary for the performance of all kinds of ceremonies; and those of the third serve them during pollution. They appear to correspond to the Chárnavar and Sudras. Swarupattil Nayars or Swarupakkár (from *swarupam*, princely house) are so called because of their service in princely houses or Kshatriya families. They are next in rank to *Illakkars*.

• [167] 4. *Agattu and Purattu Chárna Nayars*.—The Chárna Nayars or Chárnavar who are mostly immigrants from Malabar include the two subdivisions, Agattu Chárnavar and Purattu Chárnavar, "inside and outside retainers," respectively. There are two explanations of the terms. According to one, the Purattu Chárnavar are the armed retainers of the various chieftains, while the Agattu Chárnavar are the personal and domestic servants. According to the other explanation, the distinction refers to their position at *yágams* (sacrifices) at which it is said that various duties inside the *yúgasala* or sacrificial pandal are to be performed by the Agattu Chárna Nayars, while the Purattu Chárna Nayars remain on guard outside. In point of social precedence, the Purattu Chárnavar are ranked superior to the Agattu Chárnavar, probably because the latter do not belong to any of the fighting clans. A woman of [582] the former may mate with a man of the latter, but not vice [264] versa. Only the men of the two subdivisions may eat together, but the women may mate with men of their own clan or of any other or with a Nambuthiri. The men of this class form *sambandhams* in South Malabar with the Kiriyaattil women. The caste-men affix the title of Nayar after their names. There are many of this class found in the State.

[451] 5. *Menökkki and Pattóla Menon*.—Men of these castes serve as accountants in temples and in aristocratic families.

TABLE 62

EMIGRATION FROM AND IMMIGRATION TO OTHER PARTS OF INDIA

Year	Number of		Percentage of population		
	Immigrants	Emigrants	Immigrants	Emigrants	Balance
1901	82,023	16,346	2.18	0.43	1.75
1911	83,278	26,112	1.91	0.60	1.31
1921	86,607	29,023	1.78	0.58	1.20
1931	164,389	48,503	2.61	0.77	1.84
1951	206,823	205,816	2.23	2.22	0.01

SOURCE: Census of India, 1951, Travancore-Cochin, Part I A, Report.

TABLE 63

INVESTMENT DURING THE COMING DECADE (1960-61 to 1970-71)

Items	State sector (Rs. crores)	Centre and private (Rs. crores)	Total (Rs. crores)	Percentage share in total investment	Percentage share, All- India Third Plan
1. Agriculture	51.7	56.0	107.7	10.8	20.8
2. Plantations	50.6	129.0	179.6	18.1	
3. Forests	5.7	..	5.7	0.6	
4. Animal Husbandry	2.6	..	2.6	0.3	
5. Fisheries	2.3	8.3	10.6	1.1	
6. Minerals	0.3	0.4	0.9	0.1	
PRIMARY SECTOR	113.8	193.7	307.5	30.9	28.8
7. Factory Industries	31.2	114.1	145.3	14.6	
8. Small Scale Sector	14.0	28.0	42.0	4.3	
9. Non-factory Sector	..	18.6	18.6	1.9	
SECONDARY SECTOR	45.2	160.7	205.9	20.8	30.1
10. Power	102.0	..	102.0	10.3	
11. Transport	70.0	28.4	98.4	9.9	
12. Social Services	65.0	100.8	165.8	16.6	
13. Inventories	15.0	60.0	75.0	7.5	
14. Rural Public Works	40.0	..	40.0	4.0	
TERTIARY SECTOR	292.0	189.8	481.8	48.3	100.0
GRAND TOTAL	450.8	543.6	994.4	100.0	
Loans from State Government to the Private Sector	+47.0	-47.0			
	497.8	496.6			

* Investment in social services has been derived from the Third Plan estimates (all-India) by assuming the same per capita investment as in all-India.

595 who do still live matrimonially in this way. From a certain Musad (low-caste Nambudri Brahmin practising surgery) whom I met in Shoranur
 115 and who was introduced to me as someone well informed because, owing
 115 to his profession, he had access where others could not go, I heard that in the very closed Court circles of Cochin and Travancore polyandry of the old type is still practised by Nayar ladies, who consort with wealthy Tamil Brahmins and Pillais from the east coast. It would naturally have been far beyond the bounds of possibility for me personally to investigate the truthfulness of this allegation, and therefore it can only be given here for what it is worth.

Thandans and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north Cochin practise polyandry of the fraternal type, and none other. They are *makkathayam*, and a regular wedding ceremony is usual in their case. Cross-cousin marriage, in
 585 which a woman marries her father's sister's son, her *machchunan* and
 595 all his brothers, is preferred if not compulsory. The ceremony is performed at the bride's house, after the preliminary exchange of bride-price and dowry have taken place between the two families involved, and consists of the girl and her bridegrooms being seated in a row and fed ritually on *kanji* (rice porridge) and coconut milk. The honeymoon of the newly wed also takes place at the home of the wife, her husbands going to her either each in turn or in a body. Later residence of the family is patrilocal.

193 Most Thandans and Tiyas of central Kerala used to be toddy tappers,
 1463 as I have mentioned earlier (p. 172). This occupation, they say, they
 595 brought from Ceylon, from where they are reputed to have originated; they also profess to have brought from there the coconut palm tree and the practice of fraternal polyandry. The tradition is closely linked to that of the Kammalans whom I shall describe next, and there does seem to be some evidence of close ties with the great island to the south. To
 167 this day, many Thandans and Tiyas emigrate temporarily to Ceylon as labourers, and it is said, although the etymology may be fanciful as some authors insist, that Tiya is derived from *dvipa*, "island" in Sanskrit.

595 I found Thandan and Tiya polyandry quite active still in Walluvanad
 198 and in north Cochin. I had been led to believe that it was fast dying out and that only very few practised it any longer. But this was not my impression, especially in the taluk of south Malabar. In north Cochin, a recent enactment known as Act XVII of 1115 The Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act of 1940, had made polyandry illegal in future, and it is true that nine years after the coming into existence of the new legislation, only the older people still practised the ancient form of marriage.

The informant, Velu, with whom we spoke, kept us outside the house on some chairs in the drive leading up to the property. He did not seem inclined to let us come in. 595* [123]

I made the accompanying genealogy with Velu. It is rather an extensive one since the family was large, and therefore I have laid it out in two Tables (4 & 5), separating the two lots of polyandrous families in which the older generation was divided. As regards the name, the informant told me that the *tarawad* contained five households, of which this was one; they had appellations principally of the four cardinal points, the name of his household meaning "eastern". 595* 601

Velu and his two younger brothers were married polyandrously to Kalyany, who had become their wife after her elder sister, Amalu, had died. This appeared to be somewhat reminiscent of sororate, but I understand that it was not so, the brothers simply having taken their sister-in-law in marriage because they liked her and thought it a good idea. The two elder brothers who were now dead, Pangan and Karapan, had also been married polyandrously to Mogami, who was still alive; she was sixty five at the time of my research work. They had had her all to themselves, because the three younger men had not wanted her, although for what reason it was impossible to make Velu say. All that he would impart to us was that they did not want her, and brought in Amalu as their wife, and kept her in the same house with the others. Even today, he said, they all lived together, without the property having been divided up between them.

Mogami had had eighteen children of whom thirteen were still alive. 595* I had an opportunity to meet this remarkable woman some weeks later, and I found her a lively and intelligent person, who did not appear to be the slightest bit worn out by her two husbands and many children. She was thin and rather small with flashing eyes and a very sharp brain. She told me many anecdotes of her former married life, with great relish and obvious pleasure, as if she had been extremely happy in it. She was quite unashamedly proud of her achievements and her present widowed life was kept interesting by the memories for which she lived.

Two of her eldest daughters, Lakshmi and Kuniyukuti, had been married polyandrously, and still lived under that arrangement, although Chankuni, the elder husband of Kuniyukuti, was rarely at home; he was employed as a peon in Ceylon, and only paid brief visits to Kerala. This brought the total number of polyandrous families in the Kereghetil household to four. 596* [67]

It should be noted, however, that only the men and their families as 597*

[Text continues on p. 183]

to the four eldest boys to begin with. That was twenty seven years ago, 595 * and she was forty six now. Innayakkan, the last husband, had joined 601 his brothers later, when he was twelve and with their consent, but there had been no ceremony.

Very soon after this, Iyyer, the third husband, finding conditions too difficult in Kerala, did what many Tiyas had done since time immemorial; he emigrated to Ceylon, where he worked as a railway coolie. Kalyany had remained with Koppan, Pangoda, Ponan and Innayakkan, and she had had five children by them. Then Ponan died of tuberculosis, ten years after the wedding, aged twenty five. Fifteen years ago, the two eldest men had also left for Ceylon and sent Iyyer back to look after their wife. He had returned, had taken up his former profession of toddy tapping, and was her only real husband now. She had had three more children by him, Balakrishnan was the second and the only boy. There had been no news at all of Koppan and Pangoda, and she presumed that they were dead. Innayakkan had run away from home some time back and had never been heard of again; he was also presumed dead. With Iyyer and herself lived Kesheran, her second son, two unmarried girls and the three last children. Work was still scarce, and pay meagre, so that Aiyappan, the eldest, had gone to Kozhikode (Calicut) in order to try and gain employment. His brother, Padmanappan, had done the same, but he had gone to Madras, on the east coast. She had been trying to help Balakrishnan find work all day: yesterday he had been given a job as a coolie, but today, he was unemployed. [464] [167]

Kalyany told me that she was related to the brothers of the Katukulangara tarawad whom I had interviewed at Kadavelur on the 27th of October. She was a half sister of Velu by another mother. I found this family particularly interesting, because it illustrated, more than any other Tiya one encountered so far, the ancient and persistent connection which the caste has with Ceylon. Their genealogy is given in Table 8. [464] [166]

Before going on to an account of my visits to Kammalans and other artisan families practising polyandry in Kerala, I would like to give here, together with the material that I collected about Tiyas, the description of a Thandan family that I went to see on the 25th of November 1949. 595 *

They lived in a large house, standing in a big garden of coconut trees, arecanut palms, plantains and jacks. It was situated at the cross-roads of the Nilambur valley track and the highway to Pattambi, quite close to Shoranur. [351] [361]

I began by interviewing the matriarch of the household, an old lady of eighty, called Kali, the widow of five husbands. The household and [601]

[Text continues on p. 191]

tarawad name was Neripatta, and the property now belonged to the old woman and her sons. They were *verumpattam* cultivators for a Nayar *kanamdar*, the Shoranur *desammangalam* (village headman) whom I had met. They paid a rent of five rupees.

I heard that of the old generation, the four brothers, Painsi, Krishna, Raman, Aiyappan and Narayan, were dead – although there was some doubt about Narayan, the last one. As he had emigrated to Singapore and had never come back, they presumed that he had died there. They had all been wed polyandrously to Kali when she was seventeen, and she was now left with her four sons, who had begun by being polyandrous, but who had eventually taken wives of their own, the common wife, Paru, having stayed with the eldest, Velandi. The property had, however, not been split up, and they lived in the mansion-sized house, which was happily large enough to contain them all. Presumably it was also sufficiently big to keep the women from quarrelling and dragging the men into their squabbles – something which people who live in polyandry seem particularly to fear. Of the third generation, the two grandsons, Velu and Krishna, had also lived polyandrously, having taken one Kalyani as a common wife. Like their two sisters they had, however, died, aged thirty and twenty respectively, leaving a couple of boys with their widow to look after. There had thus been three generations of polyandrous marriages in this family.

Another point of interest was the fact that two of Kali's sons, Paragnoden and Krishna had broken away, the former after having first been married with his elder brothers to Paru. They had married their fathers' sisters' daughters, Vali in the first case, and Janeki in the second. When I enquired why this was so, I found it difficult to get a precise answer. I was told that was because this was a "right" marriage, and that if possible, marriage with a *machchunan* is "best". But I evoked only silence and some quizzical looks when I asked why then Paragnoden was first married polyandrously to Paru. It seemed to me – although this is only my personal impression and I was not told so – that the polyandrous marriage was gone through with because it was customary in those days, when the elder brother got married, for the younger ones to join in. Later, when Paragnoden, for reasons which he did not impart to me, felt like putting up a household of his own, he naturally turned to his cross-cousin, on his fathers' side. He was eighteen when he married Paru, with his brothers, and twenty two when he left her and took Vali to wife. This would not account, however, for Krishna, the youngest, not having also been married to Paru. It may be, of course that he was

595*
601
[427]

[67]

595*
582
601

POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

233

"Europeanism" further enhanced its influence in Malabar with the introduction of new industries and capitalistic enterprise. The coconut, cashew nut and coir industries employ thousands today and have created amongst the people an even greater dependence on the fluctuations of world prices than in the days of the pepper trade. Weaving, tile factories (such as the one founded by the Basel Mission), saw-mills, match factories and metal industries have given many people a new outlook on life which they could never have had in the old days, and has profoundly changed their traditional concepts. Prohibition introduced by the Congress Party Government, with its consequent forbidding of the ancient profession of toddy tapping, has thrown many Tiyas out of work, obliging them to seek their livelihood elsewhere, and modifying for this reason the traditional structure of their economy and family life.

Greater and better medical facilities, as well as a growth in industrial productivity, have brought about a correspondingly sharp rise in the population, so much so, indeed, that today Kerala ranks first in density to the square mile out of the whole of India. Agricultural prosperity has unfortunately not kept pace with this advance, making it often difficult for everyone to obtain food, especially when the monsoon fails, as it often does in the latter part of the year. Foodstuffs, especially grain, have thus to be imported from outside, and when this is not sufficient, many seek work in other parts of the world, leaving their families for years at a time, to emigrate and hire themselves out as labourers in Ceylon, Singapore, and the Malay Federation.

It is not surprising, under the circumstances, that the old order in Kerala has crumbled. Of the rajas and maharajas of old, none are any longer in positions of responsibility, those of Cochin and Travancore having also been made destitute by the recent re-arrangement of States in India. The Nambudri Brahmins are, perhaps, those who, because of their priestly character, continue more than anyone else, to lead the ancient, traditional life. Many of them, however, have gone in for the new enterprises, and if they do not always themselves own and direct them, they have invested funds in them. The younger members of the *illams* appear to be increasingly dissatisfied with their lot, and do not seem prepared to accept the old imperatives of occupation and succession. It may not, after all be just a coincidence that the Communist Party Government now in power in Kerala is headed by a Nambudri Brahmin.

The Nayar caste is no doubt the one that has been the hardest hit by the sweeping changes brought about by altered conditions. But its

in their opinion. There are no other investments so secure, and a little land will feed a man and his family even when he is indisposed to work. Again, a certain amount of prestige is attached to a landed proprietor especially when he is a big one, though there is not such adoration as can sometimes be observed in the attitude of the common people towards the Government officials big and small. 454 [556]

There has been a certain dislocation in the labour market on account of the emigration of certain classes of workers to the rubber and other estates recently established in some parts of the State and elsewhere. Their low wages, their low social position, the baits employed, somewhat nefariously, by the recruiting agents, and the grandiose hopes which the workers entertain of the unseen, have all combined to deplete the village of a certain class of workers from agriculture. The wages not only of agricultural labourers, but of all classes of workers, carpenters, masons, bricklayers, coolies, etc., have gone up. Few of the emigrants have returned, and those who return are certainly not very desirous of going back. 464 167

Manual labour is still looked upon as derogatory, and a well-to-do high caste man labouring upon his own compound or his own fields or allowing either his sons or relatives to do the same would be looked upon with contempt. High caste men have always to employ low caste people for any and every work, agricultural or domestic. Skilled work such as carpentry, blacksmithy, masonry, etc., is invariably performed by the particular "castes", which are hereditary and exclusive in character. These occupy a low position in the Hindu hierarchy of caste, but not so low as that other kind of agricultural labourers whom I called "Cherumas" or Pariahs, who occupy the lowest place of all. Each is respectful to his superiors and somewhat exacting to his inferiors, but there is nothing like hatred or dissatisfaction with one's lot in any of the castes. They take it as Nature-given and the social organism works in a smooth fashion, each man having his own work and his own aspirations. Judging from the present state of affairs it is impossible, and I think undesirable, to unsettle this order of things. There is scope however for the diffusion of education and knowledge, for the opening of a diversity of occupation, for infusing better ideals of social life and joint work, for improving agriculture and removing rural indebtedness and providing means of its non-recurrence in the future. But all this requires enlightened and sympathetic workers. 461

the brother or son, in the case of a Nayar the sister's son succeeds. 428
The Travancore and Cochin royal families and the Zamorin family descend in the female line.

Water-supply.—Drinking water is supplied by the wells. Every house has one. The sinking of wells is easy here since the soil is loose and there is no rock and the height above the sea level is not much. Wealthy people build the well with granite, others leave it with mud banks. The labourers dig their wells themselves as it involves only two days' work. The wells never dry up. There are three public wells and two temple wells besides. Indëed the scarcity of water is not felt at all. But for bathing purposes the water in the tank is bad, and some people use well-water for the same. The quality of the well-water is fairly good. 312

Education.—There are seven schools of which one is a secondary school managed by the Taluk Board, one is a Government Girls' School and the other five are elementary schools, one being Muhammadan. There are 680 boys and 185 girls in attendance. 871

The education imparted is fairly satisfactory, special stress being laid on the vernacular. According to the educational curriculum prescribed by the Director, the geography of the district, a little Indian History, a good training in the vernacular, a little Arithmetic, and the beginning of English by teaching the alphabet and small words, are all taught in the school.

Eighty per cent of the men and fifteen per cent of the women can read and write the vernacular; about two per cent can read and write English, and somewhat fewer speak it. [212]
[191]

Forty boys have left the village and had a college course, and there is one girl matriculate.

About 20 boys after undergoing a little commercial training at Calicut have gone to Bombay and other commercial centres for employment.

It may here be mentioned that emigration to Ceylon is frequent. 167
Emigrants return after three or four years, and remain in the village for one year, and again go to Ceylon. Nearly 150 have gone within recent years.

The only library in the village is the secondary school library which contains nearly 200 books, all juvenile. Five or six private persons possess some books. Some are lawyers and their books are connected with law. Others have only novels. Nobody takes study seriously. Nobody is interested in Science as a subject. This lack of enthusiasm for knowledge makes the Indian less original and less artistic. I know nobody in my village who has designed new arts or invented anything at all. This lack is everywhere visible in India and seen even among students who do not care to know anything more than those things which are prescribed for the examination. This fundamental weakness must be shamefully confessed, but there are signs of change in the right direction. 217
517

Village administration.—The head of the village is the *adhigari* or the village munsif. He is the representative of the King-Emperor. He collects the revenue, looks after the affairs of the village, has the jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal cases, controls the roads, Government lands and trees and other public places—in fact he represents every function, in a greater or lesser degree, of the King-Emperor, and is the guardian of the public peace. He must 622

APPENDIX.

I. A POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT.

By deepening the stream that flows in rainy season along the northern boundary of this desam, the lands that lie along them which now yield only a single crop can be made double crop lands. 000

II. EMIGRATION.

There are five men in Ceylon working as labourers and sending small sums to their aged parents. These return at intervals of two or three years. There is also the annual emigration of the carpenters to Calicut. 167 •

III. A TYPICAL FAMILY.

The family is not composed of a husband, wife and children. The people follow the 'Marumakkattayam' form of inheritance, i.e., inheritance along the line of the nephew. Thus the family consists of an aged mother or grandmother and her sisters and brothers, the sons and daughters of these sisters and their progeny, and so on. The eldest male member is the 'Karnavan,' the guardian and manager of the family, all the rest are 'Anandravans' who pay allegiance to the head. The male members of one family marry the females of another and vice versa, but each lives apart and they only join occasionally. The system, however, is rudely breaking up under modern conditions. 596 [428]

perform priestly functions for the lowest classes. There are also in the village a few families of Ambalavasis (about 35 persons) who rank above the Nayars and perform menial and other functions in temples, and also practise Ayurvedic medicine. 162

Births and deaths.—The village register gives the following statistics of births and deaths for the year 1915 (as far as I could ascertain, a normal year). 163

<i>Births.</i>					Males.	Females.	Total.
Hindus	...	...	...	...	37	41	78
Muhammadans	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
					39	42	81

<i>Deaths.</i>					Males.	Females.	Total.
Below 1 year	...	...	...	...	8	2	10
Between 1 and 5	...	...	...	...	1	4	5
" 5 and 10	...	...	...	...	4	1	5
" 15 and 20	...	...	...	...	2	1	3
" 30 and 40	...	...	...	...	2	2	4
" 40 and 50	...	...	...	...	3	...	3
" 50 and 60	...	...	...	...	2	2	4
Above 60	...	...	...	...	3	4	7
					25	16	41

Causes—

	Males.	Females.	} Causes are not accurate.
Fever	7	6	
Dysentery and diarrhoea	11	6	
Respiratory diseases	6	4	
Injuries	1	...	
		25	16

The figures seem to be fairly accurate, though not quite so. The death rate seems to be too low compared to the birth rate. But the figures are admittedly incomplete as is seen from the remarks made upon the register by the supervising authority. The deficiency is probably in the record of *deaths of young children*.

The causes of this defect are (1) registration not being compulsory; (2) indifference or ignorance of village authorities and of villagers who hardly seem to realize the importance of registration; (3) the villagers' suspicion of registration; they do not know its object.

There is no Paracheri strictly so called as in villages of eastern districts. There are scattered dwellings of depressed classes, Cherumas and Pariahs. There are five families of Pariahs, consisting of 13 men, 13 women and 16 children. Of the men two have gone for work to the Kolar Gold Fields and one to Wynaad. The proportion of children to adults is much smaller among the Cherumas and Pariahs than among the Brahmans and Nayars. 621 167

land is the chief source of a livelihood and industries do not exist. What is the conclusion? The increasing emigration to other places points in the same direction. The fact that the emigrants return as soon as they earn something shows that they are not likely to leave home unless hard-pressed. The increasing indebtedness of the villagers and the growth in the number of assignments and mortgages are other evidence. But population has increased only 7 per cent between 1901 and 1911. Wages are very low and have not risen in proportion to prices. Prices of food-stuffs have in many cases doubled within my own personal knowledge. Articles like milk, ghee, etc., have doubled in price within the last ten years. The price of grain has risen enormously in a generation. I have been told on good authority that some fifty years ago grain was four times as cheap as to-day. Only the land-owning classes and those who have surplus grain to sell have profited from this high rise. Many independent owners of land have been forced to sell their land to keep themselves free from debt and to pay the Government taxes. Taxation is much heavier: when the settlement was introduced into the village some twelve years ago the assessment was doubled and many villagers suffered. Against all this evidence of deterioration one must place the improvement in the standard of living of some classes and the growth of education, though unsatisfactory in many respects.

As for possibilities of economic improvement and the opportunities therefor, it may be said that the former are many, the latter few (as things now are) unless the villagers get help from outside—from the Government. In the sphere of agriculture improvement is badly needed, though the means of bringing it seem to be lacking, methods of cultivation could be improved and the use of scientific manure introduced. But all this requires capital and that is conspicuous by its absence. The advantage must be practically demonstrated to the cultivator and to the landlord, who alone can take the initiative herein. It seems to be impossible to introduce scientific farming so long as the system of scattered and strip holdings continues. The landlord must get his lands continuous; as it is as many as half a dozen landlords may have strips of land in one survey division of half a dozen acres. A man holding 10 acres may have it in 20 parcels, a distance of a mile from one plot to another is not uncommon.

About the possibility of extending the area of irrigated land only an expert could speak with confidence. As it is, out of a total area of 2,380 acres only 680.78 acres are wet land and 110 acres garden land—the rest coming under 'unoccupied or occupied dry.' It would be a very good thing if more of this could be brought under cultivation than at present. It does not appear that many more wells could be sunk with advantage. At present the wet and garden lands abound in wells, the 'dry' land being without any. It would not pay to sink wells in it and take out water according to the existing methods. If cheaper and more efficient methods are possible, then it would be worth attempting.

Something might be done—must be done, if the village is to improve—to ameliorate the general condition of the villagers and

178
511
[67]

[423]

312

600